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ABSTRACT

A study examined whether advertising appeals based on product affiliation, achievement, and attributes would account for differences in male readership of liquor advertisements. The investigation focused on the relationship between the content of alcholic beverage advertisements and attention engagement, the first state in consumer information processing. The sample consisted of 48 Starch scored ads taken from 3 weekly magazines. The ads were evaluated by three trained coders who were instructed to carefully study each ad and, based on an "overall impression" decision rule, identify them as employing a product affiliation, achievement, or attribute appeal. ANOVA was used to test for readership differences between liquor ads employing the three different appeals. Included in the analysis were the three major levels of Starch scores: (1) "noted" (percentage of readers who saw the ad); (2) "seen/associated" (percentage of readers who read any part of the ad); and (3) "read most" (percentage of readers who read more than half of the ad's copy). The liquor ads employing appeals to achievement significantly outscored the ads employing appeals to affiliation and product-attributes in readership. There were no statistically significant differences in the readership scores between the liquor ads employing appeals to affiliation and those employing appeals to attributes. (HTH)

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Advertising Division

THE READERSHIP OF LIQUOR ADS EMPLOYING APPEALS TO AFFILIATION, ACHIEVEMENT, AND PRODUCT-ATTRIBUTES

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THE READERSHIP OF LIQUOR ADS EMPLOYING APPEALS TO AFFILIATION, ACHIEVEMENT, AND PRODUCT-ATTRIBUTES

Whiskey and other alcoholic beverages have been manufactured in the United States since 1640 and have been subject to some form of federal and state regulation since 1791.[1] Recent evidence indicates that alcoholic beverage advertising might be entering a new era of regulatory scrutiny. Four governmental agencies, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), have funded a study to determine the effects of alcohol advertising on consumers, especially young consumers. Prompted largely by the substantial increase in the per-capita consumption of alcohol,[2] the agencies seek to learn what information about alcoholic beverages is conveyed to the public by advertising; what consumers actually perceive in the messages that they see and hear; and how these messages affect their impressions and beliefs about alcohol consumption.[3] This interest hints that regulatory policy changes will follow if negative consequences are uncovered.

Although some research has focused on the content of alcoholic beverage advertising[4] little is known about the influence of such advertising on consumption behavior.[5] The few studies that have appeared in the research literature have focused on the effect of alcoholic beverage advertising expenditures on sales rather than on consumption behavior. The only study that has examined the effect of alcohol advertising on alcohol consumption was conducted by Bourgeois and Barnes.[6] The purpose of their study was to determine which variables (i.e., controllable marketing variables, semicontrollable marketing variables, and noncontrollable variables) have the most influence on the level of per-capita consumption of alcohol in Canada. The major conclusion drawn from their data was that many factors influence alcohol consumption, but that noncontrollable variables have the most influence on alcohol consumption. The volume of alcohol advertising was found to have little effect on per-capita consumption of alcohol among Canadians.

In view of the current regulatory climate surrounding alcoholic beverage advertising, the purpose of this investigation was to examine whether appeals to affiliation, achievement, and product-attributes account for male readership differences in liquor ads. Rather than focusing on how much liquor is consumed in relation to how much money is spent on liquor advertising, this investigation focused on the relationship between the content of alcoholic beverage advertising and attention engagement, the first stage in consumer information processing.

In addition to public policy concerns, there is the more practical matter concerning the most effective creative approaches for liquor advertising. While liquor consumption is logically linked to socializing, the brand of liquor consumed is often symbolic of a certain degree of status. The practical advertising question then becomes one of: Which of these appeals is more effective in attracting male readers to ads for liquor products?

Appeals to affiliation, achievement, and product-attributes were selected because an initial analysis of liquor ads revealed that they frequently employ the three appeals[7] and because appeals in liquor ads are inextricably linked to affiliation, achievement, and product-attributes, although many other appeals are also employed. As Levanthal has pointed out, a great many liquor ads appeal to the social aspects of group participation or involve liquor as an object of success.[8] Examples of appeals to affiliation include the consumption of liquor at parties, at picnics, in restaurants or in bars. Examples of appeals to achievement include the association of liquor with objects of wealth such as mansions, yachts, or country clubs, with the accomplishments of the individuals who drink the liquor, or descriptions of the type of people who drink the liquor. As suggested by Aaker and Myers[9] and supported by the initial analysis mentioned above, appeals in liquor ads also frequently focus on one or more physical attributes of liquor. Examples of appeals to product-attributes include ads that stress the uniqueness of the distilling process, the quality of the ingredients that go into producing the liquor, or the price differential between the liquor and its competitors.

Starch scored magazine ads were used to test for readership differences. Starch is a widely recognized syndicated research service which measures ad readership.[10] The service uses an aided recognition technique to establish the amount of attention that readers remember giving to a particular ad. The readership scores for each ad generally represent interviews with one hundred or more readers whose demographic characteristics match those of the magazine's audience in which the ad originally appeared.

Although the readership scores tell nothing about whether a liquor ad has any effect on higher-order stages on information processing, readership is an accepted measure of the attention-getting value of an ad and research has established that attention is a necessary condition for learning, attitudinal, and behavioral effects.[11]

METHOD

The sample consisted of forty-eight liquor ads taken from Starch scored 1977 issues of Time, Newsweek, and Sports Illustrated. Liquor was selected as the alcoholic beverage to control for the effect of inherent interest differences across different beverage types (i.e., beer. wine, etc.).[12] The ads were selected from the same issues of all three magazines to control for seasonal factors which might affect readership. To control for other factors that might influence readership scores, only full-page four color ads were included in the sample and the data analysis was confined to male-only readership scores. Although the controls limited the total number of ads analyzed to 48, they enhanced the validity of the results.

The forty-eight ads were evaluated by a panel of three trained coders. Each panel member was instructed to carefully study each ad and, based on an "overall impression" decision rule, to identify it as employing an affiliation, achievement, or product-attribute appeal.

The following definitions were developed to operationalize the appeals so that they could be categorized by the panel members. The first two were grounded in McClelland and his colleagues studies of socially-acquired motives.[13] The third was grounded in the discussion of copy approaches offered by Aaker and Myers.[14]

Affiliation: Advertisements employing this appeal seek to socially reinforce and legitimize the establishment and maintenance of positive, affectionate relations with other persons. An advertisement employing this appeal would focus on the consumption of liquor in a social group situation such as at a party or in a bar, for example.

Achievement: Advertisements employing this appeal seek to associate liquor with a wide variety of goals -- money, status, power, dominance, etc. -- and the attainment of a high standard of living. An advertisement employing this appeal would depict the acquisition and accumulation of material goods and high levels of consumption activity, for example.

Product-Attributes: Advertisements employing this appeal focus on one or more physical attributes of the liquor. For example, an advertisement employing this appeal would stress how the distilling process enhances the quality of the liquor.

The panel members were allowed to evaluate at their own pace and to review the ads as many times as they desired before making a final determination. An ad was included in the data analysis only when all three members agreed about the type of appeal employed.

ANOVA was used to test for readership differences between liquor ads employing the three different appeals. Since ANOVA can only determine if a difference exists among the three groups of ads and cannot determine if additional differences exist between all possible paired combinations of the groups, the Newman-Keuls Multiple Range Test was also performed to probe for these differences.

Included in the analysis were the three major levels of Starch scores: 1) "noted" (the percent of readers who saw the ad); 2) "seen/associated" (the percent of readers who read any part of the ad); and 3) "read most" (the percent of readers who read more than half of the ad's copy).

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the results of the ANOVA for the liquor ads employing

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Table 1 about here

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the three different appeals. For all three mean readership scores (i.e., "noted", "seen/associated", and "read most"), the computed F-statistic was significant.

The Newman-Keul's results reported in Table 2 illustrate that the liquor ads employing appeals to achievement significantly outscored the liquor ads employing appeals to affiliation and product-attributes. There were no

Table 2 about here

statistically significant differences in the readership scores between the liquor ads employing appeals to affiliation and those employing appeals to product-attributes.

DISCUSSION

While previous research has focused on the relationship between liquor advertising expenditures and the sales or consumption of alcoholic beverages, this study represents a first step toward uncovering the relationship between appeals employed in liquor ads and consumer information processing. By focusing on appeals to affiliation, achievement, and product-attributes, the results indicate that liquor ads employing appeals to achievement significantly outscore ads employing appeals to affiliation and product-attributes.

A possible explanation for these findings is that affiliation appeals are generic in nature while achievement appeals are perceived to be inextricable tied to the brand. The brand symbolizes the reader's achieved status. Affiliation needs can be achieved via a variety of brands while achievement needs are only fulfilled by specific brands.

Taking into consideration that nothing can be said about the relationship between achievement appeals and higher order stages of information processing (i.e., believability, attitude change, etc.) or the sequence in which information processing occurs (i.e., whether ad readership leads to purchase behavior or whether purchase behavior leads to ad readership),

the results suggest that appeals to achievement enhance the "attention-getting" value of magazine ads for liquor. More research is needed, however, on the relationship between appeals to achievement and information processing for other types of alcoholic beverages. For example, over different alcoholic beverages, purchase situations (e.g., trial versus repeat), and consumer segments (e.g., male versus female), ads employing appeals to achievement might be related differently to readership as well as to other stages of information processing such as belief formation, believability, attitude change, and actual purchase behavior.[15] These higher order relationships should be the focus of additional research.

Another area that needs research is how inter-brand factors affect variability in the attention-getting power of liquor ads. For example, there is a possibility that an ad for a popular brand of liquor might inherently attract more attention than an ad for a less popular brand, regardless of the type of appeals employed in ads. This possibility also should be the focus of future research.

TABLE 1

ANOVA: MEAN READERSHIP SCORES FOR DIFFERENT APPEALS

	APPEALS									ANOVA	
	Product (N=14)			Affiliation (N=15)			Achievement (N=19)				
		Range			Range			Range			
Scores	$\bar{X}$	min	max	$\bar{X}$	min	max	$\bar{X}$	min	max	F	P
"Noted"	36.1	21	47	35.8	24	51	46.4	31	59	10.40	.01
"Seen/Associated"	30.2	18	43	26.1	14	42	40.4	25	58	13.28	.01
"Read Most"	7.7	2	20	4.0	2	9	16.9	2	32	16.61	.01

TABLE 2

Paired Comparisons of Readership Scores for Different Appeals*

Appeal	$\bar{X}$	Appeal	$\bar{X}$	Difference Between Means	Significance Level
"NOTED" SCORES					
Achievement	46.4	Affiliation	35.8	10.6	.01
Achievement	46.4	Product Attribute	36.1	10.3	.01
Product Attribute	36.1	Affiliation	35 8	.3	NS
"SEEN/ASSOCIATED" SCORES					
Achievement	40.4	Affiliation	26.1	14.3	.01
Achievement	40.4	Product Attribute	30.2	10.2	.01
Product Attribute	30.2	Affiliation	26.1	4.1	NS
"READ MOST" SCORES					
Achievement	16.9	Affiliation	4.0	12.9	.01
Achievement	16.9	Product Attribute	7.7	9.2	.01
Product Attribute	7.7	Affiliation	4.0	3.7	NS

*The Newman-Keuls Multiple Range Test was used to compute the paired comparisons.

FOOTNOTES

1. Norman K. Denzin, "Notes on the Criminogenic Hypothesis: A Case Study of the American Liquor Industry," American Sociological Review, 50:905-920 (1977).

2. Jacques C. Bourgeois and James G. Barnes, "Does Advertising Increase Alcohol Consumption?," Journal of Advertising Research, 19:19-29 (1979).

3. Office of Trade and Consumer Affairs, Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Washington, D.C., June 22, 1978.

4. Reginald Smart and Mark Krakowski, "The Nature and Frequency of Drugs Content in Magazines and on Television," Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 18:16-23 (1973); Gerhard Hanneman and William McEwen, "The Use and Abuse of Drugs: An Analysis of Mass Media Content," in Ronald Ostman, ed., Communication and Drug Education (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, Inc., 1976), 65-88; Charles Winick and Mariann Winick, "Drug Education and the Content of Mass Media Dealing With Dangerous Drugs and Alcohol," Ibid., 15-37.

5. George Comstock, Television and Alcohol Consumption and Abuse (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1976).

6. Bourgeois and Barnes, op. cit.

7. Using the same procedure described in the method section of the paper, the panel evaluated the appeals employed in liquor ads. Compared with other appeals, appeals to affiliation, achievement, and product-attributes were found to be frequently employed in liquor ads.

8. Howard Leventhal, "An Analysis of the Influence of Alcoholic Beverage Advertising on Drinking Customs," in Robert McCarthy, ed., Alcohol Education for Classroom and Community (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1964), 267-294.

9. David A. Aaker and John G. Myers, Advertising Management (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975).

10. Daniel Starch, Measuring Advertising Readership and Results (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1966).

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12. Darrell B. Lucas and Stewart Henderson Britt, Measuring Advertising Effectiveness (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1963); Verling Troldahl and Robert Jones, "Predictors of Newspaper Advertising Readership," Journal of Advertising Research, 5:23-27 (1965); Dennis H. Gensch, "Media Factors A Review Article," Journal of Marketing Research, 7:216-225 (1970).

13. David C. McClelland, "Business Drive and National Achievement," Harvard Business Review, 40:99-112 (1962); "The Two Faces of Power," Journal of International Affairs, 24:29-47 (1970).

14. Aaker and Myers, op. cit.

15. John C. Maloney, "Is Advertising Believability Really Important?," Journal of Marketing, 27:1-8 (1963); Thomas S. Robertson, "Low Commitment Consumer Behavior," Journal of Advertising Research, 16:19-24 (1976).